

Message Text

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SUBJ: ASAT TALKS: BUCHHEIM STATEMENT OF JUNE 14, 1978

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT DELIVERED BY AMB. BUCHHEIM
AT MEETING OF ASAT TALKS ON JUNE 14, 1978:

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STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR BUCHHEIM
JUNE 14, 1978

MR. AMBASSADOR,

IN OUR MEETINGS BEFORE TODAY, BOTH SIDES HAVE SUGGESTED
THAT WE CONSIDER TAKING SOME INITIAL STEPS WHILE CONTINUING
TO DISCUSS WHAT FURTHER MEASURES CAN BE TAKEN TOWARD

LIMITATION OF ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS. YESTERDAY YOU SUGGESTED THAT WE FOCUS OUR ATTENTION FIRST ON REACHING AN UNDERSTANDING WHICH WOULD PLACE EACH SIDE UNDER AN OBLIGATION NOT TO ENGAGE IN HOSTILE ACTS AGAINST SPACE OBJECTS AND WHICH WOULD IDENTIFY THE KINDS OF ACTS WHICH WOULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE HOSTILE ACTS. TODAY I WILL DISCUSS INITIAL STEPS WHICH THE U.S. BELIEVES WOULD BE USEFUL.

AS WE HAVE STATED SEVERAL TIMES, THE GOAL OF THE U.S. SIDE IN THESE DISCUSSIONS IS THE CONSTRUCTION OF A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT TO: (1) LIMIT THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS, INCLUDING THE PROHIBITION OF TESTING SUCH SYSTEMS, (2) ELIMINATE ANY EXISTING ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS, AND (3) PROHIBIT SUCH ACTS AS DAMAGE OR DESTRUCTION OF SATELLITES. WHILE THE TWO SIDES WORK TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT, THE U.S. SIDE BELIEVES THAT IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE TO CONSIDER IMMEDIATE INTERIM UNDERTAKINGS WHICH WOULD NOT ONLY BE USEFUL IN THEMSELVES BUT WHICH COULD ALSO IMPROVE THE POSSIBILITIES FOR SUCCESS IN OUR NEGOTIATIONS. IN OUR VIEW, DISCUSSION COULD AND SHOULD CONTINUE ON ALL OF THE ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT WHILE, AT THE SAME TIME, WE WORK OUT SOME INITIAL UNDERSTANDINGS LIMITING ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS.

AS AMBASSADOR WARNKE STATED AT THE BEGINNING OF THESE PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS, THE U.S. SIDE HAS NO FORMAL PROPOSALS TO MAKE AT THIS TIME. THE U.S. CAN CONSIDER, HOWEVER, AS AN INITIAL STEP, AN IMMEDIATE TWO-PART UNDERSTANDING
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TO PLACE LIMITS ON ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS. BOTH PARTS HAVE ALREADY BEEN MENTIONED. ONE PART WOULD DEAL WITH ATTACKS ON SATELLITES. THE OTHER PART WOULD PROVIDE FOR A SUSPENSION OF TESTING OF ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS.

AS I SAID YESTERDAY, THERE APPEAR TO BE TWO POSSIBLE APPROACHES TO THE STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST PART, THAT IS, THE PART DEALING WITH ATTACKS ON OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE. WE COULD CONSTRUCT AN UNDERSTANDING NOT TO CARRY OUT HOSTILE ACTS AGAINST OBJECTS LAUNCHED INTO OUTER SPACE, TOGETHER WITH A STATEMENT OF WHAT ACTIONS WOULD BE CONSIDERED TO BE HOSTILE ACTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE UNDERSTANDING. ALTERNATIVELY, WE COULD CONSTRUCT AN UNDERSTANDING NOT TO CARRY OUT THOSE SAME ACTIONS. WE ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER EITHER APPROACH TO THE STRUCTURE OF THIS PART.

THE U.S. SIDE HAS SUGGESTED SO FAR THREE KINDS OF ACTIONS WHICH WE COULD CONSIDER PROHIBITING IN THIS CONTEXT: DAMAGING A SATELLITE, DESTROYING A SATELLITE, AND CHANGING THE ORBIT OF A SATELLITE.

THE SECOND PART, PROVIDING FOR SUSPENSION OF TESTING OF ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS AGAINST OBJECTS IN SPACE, WOULD DEMONSTRATE OUR MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO AVOIDING COMPETITION IN ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS. I WILL SUMMARIZE AGAIN OUR VIEWS ON

THIS ASPECT OF AN INTERIM UNDERSTANDING. ABSTENTION FROM TESTING WOULD ENHANCE THE POSSIBILITY THAT WE WILL SUCCEED IN REACHING A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT LIMITING ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS. CONVERSELY, CONTINUED TESTING CAN ONLY HAVE THE EFFECT OF INCREASING CONCERNS ON BOTH SIDES ABOUT THE SAFETY OF SATELLITES AND THE CONFIDENCE THAT CAN BE ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR USE FOR THE IMPORTANT PURPOSES WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED.

THE DETAILS OF THE SECOND PART OF AN INTERIM UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES COULD PROVIDE FOR A SUSPENSION OF TESTS BY BOTH SIDES FOR AN APPROPRIATE AND MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE PERIOD OF TIME AND FOR OTHER ESSENTIAL ASPECTS OF IMPLEMENTATION.

WHILE THIS INTERIM UNDERSTANDING LENDS STABILITY TO THE SITUATION, THE TWO SIDES CAN CONTINUE TO EXPLORE THE
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POSSIBILITIES FOR A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT THAT WILL ASSURE THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES VOLUNTARILY FOREGO ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS IN ORDER TO AVOID AN ARMS COMPETITION IN OUTER SPACE.

THE U.S. SIDE BELIEVES THAT AN ADEQUATE INITIAL UNDERTAKING WOULD CREATE A FAVORABLE ATMOSPHERE FOR CONTINUED DISCUSSIONS AIMED AT THE CONCLUSION OF A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT ON ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS AND ACTIVITIES. THE DETAILS OF SUCH INITIAL UNDERTAKINGS, AND THE FORM THEY MIGHT TAKE, ARE TOPICS THE SIDES COULD USEFULLY EXPLORE PROMPTLY.

IN CONCLUSION, MR. AMBASSADOR, THE U.S. SIDE SUGGESTS THAT WE CONSIDER A TWO-PART INTERIM UNDERSTANDING AS AN INITIAL STEP ON THE WAY TOWARD OUR ULTIMATE GOAL OF A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT. ONE PART WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF PROHIBITING CERTAIN ACTIONS AGAINST SATELLITES. THE OTHER PART WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF SUSPENDING THE TESTING OF ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS. IN OUR VIEW, NEITHER CONSIDERATION OF THIS INITIAL STEP, NOR REACHING AGREEMENT ON IT, SHOULD IMPEDE CONTINUED DISCUSSION OF ALL ELEMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT TO LIMIT ANTI-SATELLITE SYSTEMS. I WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR VIEWS ON THIS KIND OF APPROACH.
RIDGWAY. UNQUOTE VANCE

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